

CUASI-EXPERIMENTAL

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**USE OF LITERATURE IN THE ESL
CLASSROOM: NURSERY RHYMES**

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NURESRY RHYMES***

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Use of Literature in the ESL Classroom: Nursery Rhymes

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Preámbulo

El Real Decreto 1393/2007, de 29 de octubre, modificado por el Real Decreto 861/2010, establece en el Capítulo III, dedicado a las enseñanzas oficiales de Grado, que “estas enseñanzas concluirán con la elaboración y defensa de un Trabajo Fin de Grado [...] El Trabajo Fin de Grado tendrá entre 6 y 30 créditos, deberá realizarse en la fase final del plan de estudios y estar orientado a la evaluación de competencias asociadas al título”.

El Grado en Maestro en Educación Infantil por la Universidad Pública de Navarra tiene una extensión de 12 ECTS, según la memoria del título verificada por la ANECA. El título está regido por la *Orden ECI/3854/2007, de 27 de diciembre, por la que se establecen los requisitos para la verificación de los títulos universitarios oficiales que habiliten para el ejercicio de la profesión de Maestro en Educación Infantil*, con la aplicación, con carácter subsidiario, del reglamento de Trabajos Fin de Grado, aprobado por el Consejo de Gobierno de la Universidad el 12 de marzo de 2013.

Todos los planes de estudios de Maestro en Educación Infantil se estructuran, según la Orden ECI/3854/2007, en tres grandes módulos: uno, *de formación básica*, donde se desarrollan los contenidos socio-psico-pedagógicos; otro, *didáctico y disciplinar*, que recoge los contenidos de las disciplinas y su didáctica; y, por último, *Practicum*, donde se describen las competencias que tendrán que adquirir los estudiantes del Grado en las prácticas escolares. En este último módulo, se enmarca el Trabajo Fin de Grado, que debe reflejar la formación adquirida a lo largo de todas las enseñanzas. Finalmente, dado que la Orden ECI/3854/2007 no concreta la distribución de los 240 ECTS necesarios para la obtención del Grado, las universidades tienen la facultad de determinar un número de créditos, estableciendo, en general, asignaturas de carácter optativo.

Así, en cumplimiento de la Orden ECI/3854/2007, es requisito necesario que en el Trabajo Fin de Grado el estudiante demuestre competencias relativas a los módulos de formación básica, didáctico-disciplinar y practicum, exigidas para todos los títulos universitarios oficiales que habiliten para el ejercicio de la profesión de Maestro en Educación Infantil.

En este trabajo, el módulo *de formación básica* permite enmarcar las bases teóricas psicológicas, sociales y culturales sobre la adquisición del lenguaje, tanto de la lengua materna como de una segunda lengua. En el caso de este proyecto, la segunda lengua a tratar es el inglés. Estas bases teóricas me han permitido tener un punto de partida en el que las características de los niños de Educación Infantil son presentadas y explicadas. Todas ellas, y en especial aquellas más relevantes y significativas para mi proyecto, quedan principalmente concretadas en el Marco Teórico.

Sin embargo, no es el único sitio en el que aparecen, ya que podemos encontrar referencias a ellas a lo largo de todo el estudio. Como he dicho antes, este módulo de formación básica es el eje que articula todo el proyecto.

El módulo *didáctico y disciplinar* se desarrolla en el Marco Metodológico de este proyecto. Permite enmarcar el estilo de aprendizaje de los niños de entre tres y cinco años, así como las herramientas más útiles en el aula de Educación Infantil. Me ha permitido conocer la didáctica de las diferentes áreas curriculares y su aplicación en el aula. Todo ello se concreta en el diseño de la Unidad Didáctica presente en este trabajo.

Pese a que el foco principal de la Unidad Didáctica sean los “Nursery Rhymes” y la adquisición del Inglés, el idioma extranjero no es la única área presente en la unidad. Pueden observarse diferentes competencias de la Educación Infantil en las actividades.

Asimismo, el módulo *practicum* me ha dado conocer la realidad del entorno escolar. A lo largo de estos cuatro años he tenido la oportunidad de observar e interactuar con niños y niñas de los tres cursos de Educación Infantil. Además, durante el primer semestre de este cuarto curso, realicé las prácticas en una escuela de Estados Unidos. Esta experiencia me ofreció una visión más amplia de la educación y de la adquisición del lenguaje. Considero que el módulo *practicum* ha sido la aproximación más cercana al futuro que quiero tener y he aprendido mucho durante su realización. El *practicum* me ha permitido plantear la base hipotética sobre la que se sustenta este estudio, ya que he tomado la clase de las prácticas como punto de partida para desarrollar este proyecto.

Por último, el módulo *optativo* me ha permitido profundizar en la enseñanza-aprendizaje del inglés como segunda lengua en Educación Infantil. La realización de la especialización durante el pasado semestre en Estados Unidos, me ha dado a conocer muchos aspectos culturales, sociales, lingüísticos y escolares que considero realmente interesantes para mi formación. Durante esta experiencia, he podido ver cómo se utiliza el objeto de tu estudio en el aula.

Todas las asignaturas cursadas durante ese semestre fueron relacionadas con el aprendizaje del inglés como segunda lengua y me proporcionaron un conocimiento mucho más profundo sobre el tema. Yo misma he sentido las barreras y las dificultades de defenderse en un entorno en el que mi idioma materno no está presente, y creo que ello me hace comprender y entender las necesidades de los niños al aprender una segunda lengua. Todo esto puede verse reflejado a lo largo del estudio ya que es el tema central del mismo.

Resumen

Las características de la adquisición de una segunda lengua son más similares a las de la lengua materna de lo que parece. Teorías sobre la adquisición de una segunda lengua defienden la inmersión de la persona que la está aprendiendo en contextos que le proporcionen situaciones de aprendizaje en las que los estudiantes puedan hacer inferencias sobre significados y diferencias culturales. El uso de la literatura en el aula es una fuerte herramienta debido a sus múltiples ventajas. Los textos literarios se utilizan como estrategia de aprendizaje en países de habla inglesa para mejorar el conocimiento de los estudiantes nativos de su propia lengua, por lo que el uso de la literatura para el aprendizaje del inglés como segunda lengua también es muy beneficioso. El modo de aprender de los niños no es el mismo que el de los adultos, y eso es algo que los profesores debemos tener en cuenta a la hora de intervenir en Educación Infantil. Los “Nursery Rhymes” se convierten en una estrategia muy adecuada para el aprendizaje del inglés en niños de Educación Infantil, ya que los niños son atraídos por los ritmos y las rimas. Es por esto, por lo que su uso es una manera muy interesante de conseguir que los niños hagan producciones orales en inglés. Los estudiantes pueden adquirir un aprendizaje significativo tanto de vocabulario como de estructuras gramaticales a través del uso de “Nursery Rhymes” sin ni siquiera darse cuenta de ello.

Palabras clave: Nursery Rhymes; Aprendizaje significativo; Inglés como segunda lengua; Literatura; Educación Infantil.

Abstract

Second Language acquisition is more similar to First Language acquisition than it is thought to be. Second Language acquisition theories defend the immersion of the ESL learner into genuine contexts that provide him learning situations in which meanings and cultural differences can be inferred from. Literature is a powerful tool for using in the ESL classroom due to its multiple advantages. Literary texts are used in English-speaking countries for improving students' language knowledge, so the usage of literature when learning a second language is really beneficial for English learners too. Children way of learning is

not the same as adults' one and we must keep it in mind when teaching infants. Nursery Rhymes become a completely accurate skill for ESL learning in Infant Education because children are naturally appealed by rhythm and rhyme, so it is a really interesting way of producing English orally. Students can acquire a meaningful learning of vocabulary and grammar structures through Nursery Rhymes usage without being aware of it.

Keywords: Nursery Rhymes; Meaningful Learning, ESL, Literature; Infant Education

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the early ages of a child's life it is common to start teaching children in base to their near environment and personal experiences, making connections with the knowledge they already have. Teacher must guide children's learning offering situations in which they can explore and learn taking their personal experience as starting point. School is an essential environment for child development, so it should permit children to improve in all aspects. It gives children the opportunity of improving their cognitive, emotional, social and motor skills. In this way they will be prepared to solve problems, to be critical and creative, and to get interest in learning new things. That is why the most important objective of a teacher should be to achieve knowledge acquisition through meaningful learning.

The key point for a successful meaningful learning is relating contents to infants' interests. We need to use topics, skills, or activities that catch our student's attention or peak their curiosity. Children can understand complex contents if they are adapted to things or situations related to their daily life; that's the way of making sense of knowledge. Three, four or five-year-old children personality is based on egocentrism and syncretism and their way of thinking is not the same as ours.

Literary texts could be much more useful in the ESL classroom than they currently are, since they are a commonly used resource in Language classroom in English speaking countries. While the study of literature makes literature itself the content or subject of a language course, the use of literature as a resource encourages children language development by promoting interesting language activities among many different kind of texts. Children can internalize vocabulary and grammar structures by working with literary texts without even noticing it.

In this study I would like to prove the advantages of using literature as a teaching resource in Infant learning. Taking into account children characteristics mentioned above I will focus my study on Nursery Rhymes, due to their accuracy for covering most of infants' necessities. Children cannot be interested in one activity for a long period of time, so Nursery rhymes are a powerful tool

for keeping children awake, listening and participating; since the rhythm and rhyme are naturally appealing to a child.

We should use literature in ESL classrooms because:

- It is very motivating
- It helps students to understand another culture
- It is a stimulus for language acquisition
- Students enjoy it and it is fun
- It helps to achieve an internalization of the language
- It reinforces points previously learned
- It provides a genuine context

The point of departure in this study was getting information about second language acquisition theories, together with a revision of all the theory related to the topic I had studied during my degree.

After that, I looked for information about literature and its implications at school. I found a huge amount of texts in which literature was discussed. However, the connection between literature and school is mostly focused on literary texts analysis in the classroom.

The application of literature in education as a resource for teaching a second language was not so common, specially talking about Infant Education. Surprisingly, it is often used in English-speaking countries language learning environments for native speakers, since its use is supported by many relevant language acquisition theories.

This study is divided into two main sections whose aim is to prove and/or show different teaching techniques and strategies using literature as a means of learning.

Those two sections are the following:

- Theoretic Frame
- Methodological Frame

The first section is a summary of all the texts and theory I have gone through, and the conclusions and ideas in which the Methodological frame is based on.

We can differentiate three independent, but connected parts on it. It starts talking about infants' language acquisition. Firstly I will summarize the most important theories about how children acquire their mother tongue.

The circumstances in which a person is involved when learning a second language are, clearly, not the same as the ones this person lives in their early ages when acquiring their native language.

Due to those differences between first and second language acquisition, the Theoretic Frame continues with an overview of the most relevant Second Language Acquisition Theories; such as the Behaviorist', the Innatist', and the Interactionist' perspectives. The conclusions obtained from those theories will be the support required for articulating the theoretical bases of the Didactic Unit described in the Methodological Frame.

After that, I will focus on the role of literature for second language learning and its advantages. This study encourages the use of literature in the ESL classroom and this section will support it. Literature is used for learning a first language and, both First and Second Language Acquisition Theories claim many learning conditions that literature can clearly provide.

Finally, and as a conclusion, the aims of this study pointed above are explained in this first section, showing how beneficial literature can be in an ESL classroom and summarizing all the theoretical support received.

The second section is a Didactic Unit designed taking into account all the theory mentioned in here. I took as a reference a real classroom environment. It corresponds with the classroom in which I have been doing my internship from February to April this course. It was a really challenging group of infants due to the high number of students in the classroom and to the diverse students in there.

There were three non-native Spanish speakers, so to they had an extra difficulty to adapt to the school: language. Language is directly related to culture in most of the cases, so working with foreign students' needs is more complicated than it seems to be.

There are many cultural differences that can interfere in the classroom management and in our students' learning. That is why, I will give a more in-depth view of this special needs' attention in following sections of this study.

I also want to point out that the school I am talking about is a Bilingual School. Facing twenty seven three-year-old children in a language which is not their mother tongue is not a simple task, so I consider that having a clear idea about the most efficient tools and skills a teacher can count on for achieving a successfully meaningful learning is essential.

The Didactic Unit starting point will be a Nursery Rhyme. It will give both the teacher and children the opportunity of experiencing really interesting learning situations. Diverse types of activities are articulated around the Nursery Rhyme "Ten Little Fingers".

I have created a story in relation to our fingers. Fingers play the role of the story characters; they are the main characters of the Thematic Instruction. Along the Unit many characteristics about each finger are told to the children. Specific vocabulary and grammar structures are integrated into the "story" and the usage of Nursery Rhymes are the main point for introducing them.

Nursery Rhymes, of course, are not the unique good strategy used for children language acquisition; however, I consider them awesome resources for allowing children to get familiarized to the new material.

The principal aim of the Didactic Unit is to integrate all the educational competences of Infant Education and to work all of them in English. English is not considered as a subject itself, English acquisition is expected to take place while working other Infant Education's contents. English will be a vehicle for learning content areas concepts, but English grammar and vocabulary acquisition will be present at the same time.

2. THEORETICAL FRAME

Language Acquisition Theories

Neither first nor second language acquisition is yet fully understood. As a result, many controversies and disagreements prevail among experts. Three basic theories of first language acquisition have been put forward over the years: Behaviorism, Innatism, and Interactionism.

Logically, theories about how people learn to speak a second language are directly related to the first language acquisition ones.

Behaviorist theories of language acquisition have influenced second language teaching in a number of ways that persist today in many classrooms. For behaviorists, the processes involved in second or foreign language learning consisted of imitation, repetition, and reinforcement of grammatical structures. Errors were to be corrected immediately to avoid forming bad habits that would be difficult to overcome later.

From the Innatist perspective, children construct grammar through a process of hypothesis testing. Chomsky claims that infants universally possess an innate “grammar template” or universal grammar, which allows them to select out the many grammatical rules of the language they hear around them, as they gradually construct the grammar of their mother tongue. Based on the examination of English native speakers’ common errors and English learners ones during one of his investigations, Chomsky proposed that English language learners creatively construct rules of the second language in a manner similar to that observed in first language acquisition.

Interactionist perspective defends that language acquisition emerges from communication. It remarks the important role of interaction, especially in early years when caregivers modify input and carry much of conversational load. Here appears the “scaffolding” ¹term introduced by Lev Vygotsky. He pointed out that what the learner can do with assistance now; he or she will be able to do on their own in a short period of time. Learners need to be challenged, but

¹ Lev Vygotsky (1925-1934)

with support and assistance (scaffolding) that permit them to perform at the next level.

Therefore, the idea that comprehensible input is necessary for second language acquisition is a basic point in the Interactionist position. This theory defends natural language from the teacher, friends or books as the main source of linguistic input. The immersion of the ESL into real English language in meaningful contexts is essential for letting the learner negotiate and discover meanings.

This last idea is one of the most valuable ones when we think about the advantages of literature as a tool for teaching a second language. When people learn their native language they are not “taught” the rules of grammar and the meaning of words; they work out how the language works from what they hear, imperfect though this sometimes is, and so internalize or construct mentally their knowledge of the language.

Native speakers apparently learn the meaning of about 90 per cent of the words they know from meeting them in context and not from the dictionary. When confronted with an unknown word they are more likely to make an informed guess of its meaning, based perhaps on its linguistic context or what is going on around them, than to look it up in a dictionary.

In order to internalize the grammar and work out the meaning of words from their context, foreign learners must have a sufficiently large body of authentic and understandable material to work from. It is plain that extensive reading will assist learners in this respect. A study of a variety of texts will provide a short-cut to the extensive experience of linguistic items in context that native speakers acquire by direct exposure. Such exposure to large amounts of authentic material will, moreover, reinforce what the students have previously studied as an academic exercise.

The structures and vocabulary will subconsciously register and concepts already known will be reinforced by their discovery in a different context. Students became aware of the wider areas covered by a certain word, of its function in a phrase or a sentence, of the words with which it is usually

associated, thus raising awareness of collocations, all without conscious attention as they enjoy the book.

The system of teaching languages which consists of setting isolated sentences to illustrate particular language points prevents the learners from making any analysis on the basis of context. They cannot participate in the meaning. Even native speakers have difficulty remembering unrelated words and structures and the problem is more acute for foreign learners. They need a meaningful context to work from and to which they can relate what they learn, and an interesting text can supply that need.

When composing a sentence in a new language, it is the tendency of the non-native speaker to transfer structures, syntax, and other features from their own language. Obviously, this is a serious impediment to fluency in the target language, no matter how perfect and comprehensive a student's knowledge of grammar and vocabulary may be. In each language sentences must be arranged in the particular ways that are acceptable and meaningful to a listener of that language.

For the non-native speaker at the beginning stage, it is clearly easier to sing or recite a rhyme in English than it is to communicate personal information, desires, or needs. Rhymes are easy to learn and memorize. Children derive visible satisfaction and confidence from this new acquired "fluency" that comes so quickly. It sustains the children's interest in mastering new rhymes and also in understanding the vocabulary and structures contained in the rhymes.

Nursery rhymes and songs let children practice specific structures through their recitation without noticing it. Students can learn the structures and enjoy the material without being aware that what is actually taking place is a grammar and/or vocabulary lesson.

Literature provides the necessary stimulus to incite students to speak. Students need the added stimulus of an exciting story. Wilhelm von Humboldt said many years ago "*we cannot teach language, we can only create conditions under which it can be learned*"² (Humboldt, 1999, page 25). Language will have value for the students if the material motivates them. It is difficult to find suitable texts

² This quotation appears in Hill, J. (1986) *Using Literature in Language Teaching*

for the initial stages of a language course. In infant-ESL classes we might prefer to consider extracts instead of whole texts.

The fact that literature can provide students with access to the culture of the people whose language they are studying should also be considered, since most Nursery rhymes serve as valuable cross-cultural lessons. ESL students learn about the world of their native English-speaking peers through the subjects and vocabulary treated in the verses. Rhymes offer a contextual approach to the language that works with the “natural use” of it in situations of daily life.

The Didactic Unit and its Context

The Didactic Unit I designed looks for a contextual approach to the language of the child. The tenses and vocabulary are not presented as the end goal, but as vehicles for communicating the desired message. Children will not be aware of the grammar tenses they are using or about the language formulas included in the lesson. Language is for them just a means of communication.

I want to point out that the decisions I made while designing this Didactic Unit were focused and based on ESL learners in Bilingual schools.

Bilingual education programs are defined as educational programs that use two languages. These programs have taken many forms, but two goals are common to all:

- To teach English
- To provide access to the core curriculum through the home language while students are gaining English language proficiency (Lessow-Hurley, 2005)

The specific school I am basing this study on, students receive subject matter instruction through their second language to develop second language proficiency while learning academic content. Special techniques are used to help them understand, participate, and learn in the new language. Language, content, and literacy instruction of English language progress up the grades. The ultimate goal is full bilingualism and bi-literacy in English and Spanish.

In most of the ESL cases, children's first year at school is their first approach to the English language. Their arrival in the classroom is an arrival in a new unknown environment in which they see themselves involved in routines, schedules, social rules; and, in addition, they are introduced into a new language: English.

Every single activity of this Unit has been carefully designed attending to the specific needs of the ESL and to the infants characteristics mentioned in the first section of this study. The Unit has a thematic main point, to which all the contents and materials are related.

The classroom for which I have designed the unit is located in a Spanish School, in a First Grade classroom of Infant Education with 27 students. As I said before, this group of children is very diverse. We can find some socio-

cultural differences and diverse learning ways among the twenty seven children. Not every child's maturity level is the same, and there is a huge difference between the autonomy each of them counts on. Due to that, this Didactic Unit provides a visual supported material presentation and the difficulty of the activities increases as the Didactic Unit goes going on.

The whole Lesson Plan departs from a Nursery Rhyme: "Ten Little Fingers". The thematic of the song, parts of the body, is very close, meaningful and attractive for children; so I believe that the election of this song is appropriate.

The main content points worked through this Nursery Rhyme are:

- Literacy
- The parts of the body
- The numbers (counting both up and down from one to ten)
- Colours (red, blue, yellow, green, and, orange)
- Moods (happy, sad, angry, sleepy, and hungry)
- Actions
- "What's your name?" formula
- "Where are you?" formula
- "How many...?" formula
- "How do you feel?" formula

All of those contents are centered on the reception and production of language. Taking into account the age of the children, I have put more emphasis in both oral English reception and oral English production. However, it doesn't mean that the written production is not present in this Unit. The variety of the English language will be clearly exposed in following points.

The Nursery Rhymes I selected to work the new vocabulary I will expose later may provide a particularly appropriate way of stimulating children's language and vocabulary acquisition, as it provides meaningful and memorable contexts to process and interpret new language. The students will become familiar with the new language and it will allow them to assimilate the new material.

In ESL lessons, especially at the educational stage I'm basing all my study on, visual support and gestures are the key to achieve children meaningful learning.

The materials have been carefully chosen, so students will feel that what they do in the classroom is relevant and meaningful to their own lives.

The new material here is introduced through involvement more than by demonstration. The students are not made aware that the teacher is teaching something specific; such as the usage of a vocabulary item, or a grammatical structure. The new material is just the means to an end, which will be the song or rhyme that contains the new unfamiliar items.

New vocabulary is not presented in isolation, but rather in a clear situational context. Even though, striving to have the fullest possible command over vocabulary should be encouraged.

The Classroom

Community, classroom factors and student characteristics

This didactic unit has been designed based on a real classroom environment. I will take as reference the classroom group I have been working with during my internship.

The school is located in Pamplona, Spain. It serves children from Pre-Kindergarten to High school, and it is designated as a Bilingual School.

School strives to meet the needs of all their students academically and socially. They understand that as a staff they must know their students and what their needs are.

Academically, they are focused on helping students to become lifelong learners. On a daily basis, students receive instruction from highly qualified teachers. The staff uses assessment data to plan instruction that will meet the needs of their students. Support personnel are available to assist with special education, Spanish as a Second language, Speech and Language, and instructional concerns.

Families are a huge part of their success. Parents are welcome to visit the school at any time. Monthly programmes are advertised throughout the year. Volunteers for classroom assistance as well as special projects are always

needed. Joining the PTA (Parent Teacher Association) and attending meetings such as the School Improvement Gathering is a good way to get families involved.

Regarding the learning environment, classrooms are big enough, well organized, and count on a huge amount of materials. Each class has two computers and a Smart Board. The classroom rules and routines are very strict, and the scheduling and classroom arrangement is really appropriate. The adaptation of the general rules for each grade, taking into account the students' age is very valuable. Focusing on the Infant Education period I have been able to observe that there are clear differences between the three-year-old classroom management and the five-year-old one for covering each age needs. One of the most relevant differences is the duration of the "starting day assembly" in which routines are worked. The three-year-old routines include more songs, what makes it longer and funnier than the five-year-old one. I do believe that the timing is a really important aspect to take into account when Programming in different educational grades.

Each class has an English teacher and a Spanish one. Children spend half of the day working in English, and the other half working in Spanish. English is not treated as a subject itself, it is assumed as a second language in which children work all the subjects. English acquisition takes place by itself, and by the use of the language in classroom situations. I want to emphasize that yet when students enter school with no knowledge of English, they are faced with the dual challenge of learning a new language and trying to fit into school routines both socially and academically.

This is not a small task, and that's why I designed this lesson plan keeping in mind all the points explained in the first section of this study and introducing creative activities that attend to three of the most important aspects I consider in education:

- Learn by doing

This concept changes the old fashioned role of the student. Teachers are not considered as an instructor: they guide students. The active role of the students is the key point of this idea. Knowledge is acquired by its use.

- Meaningful learning

Achieving a meaningful learning requires an active role on the part of the student. The child is responsible for his/her own learning. It relies on the connection of pre-knowledge and the new material presented to the classroom.

- Scaffolding

It is a concept introduced by Vygotsky. Scaffolds are temporary supports, provided by more capable people, which permit learners to perform a complex process before they are able to do so unassisted.

There are 3 non Spanish students, who come from different cultures. I believe that culture plays a really important role in education, and teachers must consider it when preparing and designing activities.

Many cultures have similarities, but there are many differences between them too. Students from different countries don't have the same values and they are not used to the same instructional methods at school. Education does not have the same importance in every country and culture, so teachers should take this into account in order to understand better each student.

We cannot forget that the academic level is different depending on the country students come from; so the contents studied are not always the same. Sometimes teachers may expect more than what the foreign students can actually do. This will cause frustration, because their previous knowledge is not enough to learn and add new complex contents.

Each child background has also an impact in education; as well as linguistic diversity (the communication style is different in each culture). Values and beliefs about sharing personal opinions are not the same in every culture. There are many different styles of communication; the more direct they are, the more they speak. In addition, the participation of each student in class will depend on their personality. There are children who are more talkative and outgoing than others. Active oral participation is not necessary for learning. Some children prefer to listen what the teacher and their classmates say, and then they make their own conclusions for themselves without saying aloud what they think. Language can be an obstacle for children who speak a second language.

Maybe they don't know how to say what they want to express, or maybe they think that their language is not good and prefer not to participate in class. Speaking in a language that is not yours can be uncomfortable.

Other struggling factor is the students' families. Family implication in children's education and their participation at school has not the same value and importance in every culture, so this point has a really hard impact at school when analyzing cultural and linguistic diverse students.

Teachers should be very focus on observing the student to obtain the necessary information in order to help and provide them with the most accurate education and learning method. As culture and students' background play such an important role in their development, it will be an interesting point of departure to guide the student.

In conclusion, infant education has to respond to children's characteristics, so it should follow a globalized methodology integrating aspects of each area, connecting contents and making knowledge meaningful for the corresponding age group. Every child requires a special attention if we want to offer a quality education.

Classroom management

The two main strategies I have used in the delivery of the unit are visual support and team work.

Team work provides opportunities for English learners to interact with their peers using English language; and, it also lets them have receptive and productive language learning opportunities. Team work provides both social and academic language development opportunities with other level English speakers, who give ESL example and a good model to follow. ESL has an interesting option to talk in the team and to practice in articulating ideas in English.

Visual support is a powerful and useful tool to use in the ESL classroom Any activity, if it is visually supported, acquires a more understandable and meaningful denotation. It helps ESL students not to be or to feel lost when listening to the teacher. Visual support provides them with a really necessary help. It can completely change the ESL student role in the class; they can move from a passive role into an active and participative role.

I have tried to use also the *scaffolding* strategy. I had never designed an activity based on that concept, but I believe that it can be really interesting and can help the student a lot since I believe that Scaffolding can be really beneficial. It helps the student in the process of understanding meaning and it provides really necessary feedback when producing English language.

My whole Lesson Plan is a *Thematic Instruction* based on “Our Fingers”. With the help of some Nursery Rhymes in relation to it, I have created a kind of story that tells children each finger’s life. Just departing from this topic I have been able to generate a variety of oral and written language uses, which are really important to achieve a good language and literacy development. It will, in addition, let me consider the students’ performance levels and find ways to stretch them. Thematic Instruction requires students’ active participation; and the motivation and the desire to learn about a topic that is interesting for them.

3. METHODOLOGICAL FRAME

Didactic unit: Our Fingers

First Nursery Rhyme “Ten little fingers”

*One little, two little, three little fingers,
Four little, five little, six little fingers,
Seven little, eight little, nine little fingers,
Ten little fingers on my hand.*

1. Presenting the Nursery Rhyme “Ten little fingers”

The beginning of the Didactic Unit needs to be attractive and catch children's attention. Infants love kids' songs and rhythm, since those are naturally appealing for them. This is one of the reasons why I have decided to start the Didactic Unit with a Nursery Rhyme.

Apart from this advantage, we can find many other ones in the decision of starting the Didactic Unit in this way. The main characters of the Unit appear, of course, in the song; and they are the topic of the song.

A new content is introduced through the Nursery Rhyme: numbers from one to ten. If we keep in mind that this Unit is designed for three-year-old children, we will realize that they, probably and depending on the academic semester in which we put into practice this Unit, do not have a deep knowledge of the concept of number yet. I am not referring exclusively to English language acquisition, but also to the treatment of this mathematic content in a second language, which will make children acquire the specific numbers vocabulary in English.

From my point of view, the best way of starting this Unit is by presenting the first Nursery Rhyme with an animated video³. There are many videos available for this song, but I have chosen the one I attached in the annexes because it provides a really good visual support and the content included in the song is well represented through it.

Introducing new material with this song will let them acquire a clear idea about what the concept of number means. The different quantities are dramatized in the song using the fingers. When the song says one, one finger will be shown; when the song says two, two fingers will be shown; and the same will happen with all the numbers from one to ten.

The animated video will be shown (at least twice) to the group in the Smart Board available in the classroom. Nowadays there are many technological devices that can provide a different dynamic to the classroom. Animated videos are usually really appealing to children; so we should take advantage of technology and try to incorporate it to our lessons. In addition, visual support is always a good tool in the ESL classroom because it helps students to understand the meaning of the content in a context.

Children will familiarize with the song and the visual support video will provide them with the necessary conditions for the understanding of the message. This learning situation encourages meaning inference through context, idea supported by the authors I have mentioned in the Theoretical Frame.

2. Singing the Nursery Rhyme “Ten Little Fingers”

Once children are familiarized with the song after having watched and heard it in the video, the teacher will sing it doing the gestures with their own hands and fingers; so children can participate. The whole group will sing and dramatize the song.

Joining in to the teacher, children will gain control over the material and a more in-depth understanding will take place. The concept “learn by doing” is

³ See Annex I

important in every learning environment, but I consider it an essential one in the ESL classroom.

Through the repetition of the rhyme, children will start interiorizing numbers without being aware of it. This is, in my opinion, the most beneficial advantage of working with Nursery Rhymes. Vocabulary acquisition is not presented to children as a goal; it is just the means for enjoying singing a song.

Up to this point, children will have already increased confidence in their English oral production. In addition, they have started internalizing the new vocabulary used in the song.

3. Activity: How many fingers can you see here?

As I said before, this Nursery Rhyme introduces the “finger” term and the “hand” one, but the clear aim of it is to reinforce the counting technique of children. This counting technique is really popular among infants. In most of the cases they start counting with their fingers, and this Nursery Rhyme is a funny and enjoyable way of doing so in the ESL classroom. The song counts up and down so children can work mathematic contents in English if the activities that the teacher presents are well supported.

To reinforce the mathematical contents mentioned, I propose this activity. It will take place in assembly, that is to say, in a big group. The understanding of each student will not be the same at this point, so working with the whole group will let the teacher analyze each single child grade of development and check who is having language or content struggles. In addition, children can take benefit from interacting with their peers and this activity will give them a chance for reinforcing their knowledge. Students who struggle the most will receive input from those students whose understanding level is quite good.

Using visual support in Infant Education is always recommendable to catch children’s attention and to help them follow the activity. For our ESL infant learners, this visual support will always be a tool to message comprehension. Due to that, I have decided to support this activity with flashcards. Flashcards are a really powerful tool in ESL classrooms.

As I said before, the classroom management for this activity will be an assembly. It could start with a revision of the numbers. After the review, the teacher will start showing flashcards and asking children “How many fingers can you see here?” In the beginning, children will not know what the teacher is asking, so the teacher will help them. Help can be delivered in many possible ways. A good strategy when there is a silence after a question is to give children two possible answers. For example, if the flashcard shows a hand with three fingers, the teacher can ask “How many fingers can you see here? Can you see one finger? Or can you see three fingers?” After that he or she can start counting at the same time he/she provides a support pointing at each finger. “one finger, two fingers, and three fingers!”

To make sure that children acquire and assimilate the concept, an interesting variation for this activity could be the following one: Instead of asking how many fingers the flashcard is showing, we can completely transform the activity. The teacher can say to a child “Give me three fingers” and the child has to show three fingers.

This activity will show if the child has internalized both the new vocabulary and the new content.

4. Game: “Go Fish”

This game will help children to internalize new concepts related to numbers and new English vocabulary presented by the song.

It is a matching exercise, in which there will be two cards of each number. In the card, we will see a number and a hand showing as many fingers as the number that appears in the same flashcard. The game will take place in small groups of four or five students. Each student will start the game with four flashcards, and the rest of the flashcards will be together in the middle, in a deck.

Each child will ask the classmate next to him about a flashcard he needs to match one of the flashcards he has. For example, one child has a “four”, and asks to the following one “Do you have a “four”?” If the answer is no, the child will say “Go fish”, so the child will have to take a flashcard from the middle. If he has a “four”, he will give it to the other classmate in order to match “four-four”.

Through this game, they will fund the base of English numbers and “Do you have ...?” structure.

This game is very flexible and the cards can be changed depending on the topic are being worked at each moment. By this I mean that once children get used to playing with flashcards; it can be very useful for any topic in the classroom.

Second Nursery Rhyme "Tommy Thumb, where are you?"

Tommy Thumb, Tommy Thumb, where are you?

Here I am, here I am, how do you do?

Peter Pointer, Peter Pointer, where are you?

Here I am, here I am, how do you do?

Middle Man, Middle Man, where are you?

Here I am, here I am, how do you do?

Ruby Ring, Ruby Ring, where are you?

Here I am, here I am, how do you do?

Baby Small, Baby Small, where are you?

Here I am, here I am, how do you do?

Fingers all, Fingers all, where are you?

Here we are, here we are, how do you do?

5. Introducing the next Nursery Rhyme

Children already know the structure “What’s your name?” so I think that using it to introduce the next Nursery Rhyme, in which each finger of the hand is presented by its name can be really interesting.

It will make them feel comfortable and self-confident, they will see that what they learn is useful in other activities and they will be so proud of it. The aim of this introduction to the rhyme is to peak infants’ curiosity to know how the fingers are named, so they will be focused on the song and the meaning of it will be understandable.

The activity will start with an assembly with the teacher asking to each one of the students the question “What’s your name?” They have already worked this English structure, so they have control over this formula. Just in case some of the children have forgotten about it, this introductory question to each of them will make them remember it. In this way, we are reviewing contents worked previously at the same time as we are solving possible future issues in the next Nursery Rhyme.

After every child has said his or her name, the teacher will show one finger and, looking at it, will ask to it “What’s your name?” This will make children want to know what each finger’s name is, and the solution to this question will appear in the Nursery Rhyme.

6. Presenting the Nursery Rhyme “Tommy Thumb, Where Are You”

The presentation of this Nursery Rhyme will take place accompanied by gestures and dramatization. The teacher will sing it using his or her own fingers, so children will understand what the lyrics are saying.

It becomes necessary to point out that children have previously worked and internalized vocabulary related to colours. Since the first time the song is introduced to the classroom, the teacher will have one colour sticker in each finger⁴, and each finger will be shown as the song goes on, simultaneously.

⁴ See Annex III

Both Tommy Thumbs will have a red sticker, both Peter Pointers will have a blue sticker, both Middle Mans will have a yellow sticker, both Ruby Rings will have a green sticker, and both Baby smalls will have an orange sticker.

The dramatization of the song will be like this⁵: Both hands will be hidden in the teacher's back. While the song says "Tommy thumb, Tommy Thumb, where are you?" the teacher will show their right hand's thumb, moving it up and down. When the song says "Here I am, Here I am" the left hand will also come to the front showing the other thumb and moving it up and down. In the part of the song in which it is said "How do you do?" we will shake hands. The dramatization will be the same for each finger, and in the last part of the song which refers to "fingers all" all the fingers will be shown. The song will be repeated at least twice, so it becomes familiar to children.

7. Singing the Nursery Rhyme

The whole group will join in and interpret the song. This Nursery Rhyme is very enjoyable for children and they will spend a good time representing it. The hidden aim of singing the song is the vocabulary and grammar structures acquisition. By singing, children are producing English orally and they are pronouncing and articulating a huge amount of words and structures without noticing it. One more time, Nursery Rhymes are a funny, genuine context for offering children varied meaningful learning situations.

8. Inferences for ensuring children understanding: What colour Tommy Thumb is? What colour Peter Pointer is?

Obviously, just by repeating the song a few times the vocabulary and grammar structures will not be learned by children. Songs are a really useful resource for introducing new material but, as it is being done in this Didactic Unit, other types of activities are necessary to provide students with opportunities to use the material that is being worked on. In addition, activities in relation with the

⁵ See Annex IV

content in which the vocabulary is repeated and used in different context will be really beneficial for our ESL students.

Again, visual support is an essential part of ESL learning. The vocabulary we are going to work in this activity is vocabulary which has already been studied in class (colours) together with new words. Even when working with vocabulary children already have acquired, I do believe that this activity must be supported visually.

The visual support this time will be a hand-shaped paper stuck in the blackboard. Before starting working on it, I suggest to make a review of the material that has been presented through the Nursery rhyme (fingers' names). The teacher can go through all the fingers naming them. A more childish way of introducing the activity could be to start showing each finger and saying "Hello" to each of them. For example, the teacher will show her thumb, and looking at it, will say "Hello Tommy Thumb!" Children will repeat it in order to say hello before starting the activity, but the didactic objective of this simple step before starting is to make children repeat and remember each name.

After that, the teacher will hide her hands (stickers will be still stuck in the teachers' hands). Children will have to say "One, two, three!" and the teacher will show a finger. Once children see the finger, they will be asked "What's its name?" and "What colour is it?" There will be coloured stickers next to the blackboard, and the helper will chose one child each time to stick the appropriate coloured sticker in each finger. Once the sticker is stuck, it would be convenient that the teacher makes emphasis on the structure "Tommy Thumb is red" or "Peter Pointer is blue".

With this activity children acquire a more in-depth knowledge of the material.

9. Activity: My hand

Children will line their own hand's shape on a paper. Once the hand is drawn, they will have to colour each finger following the rules presented in the activities explained above. The activity resolution will be a colourful hand.⁶ Tommy

⁶ See Annex II

Thumb will be coloured red, while the colour of Peter Pointer will be blue; Middle Man will be coloured yellow, whereas Ruby Ring will be coloured green and Baby Small orange.

Students will already know each finger's colour because they have been working on it, and they are the main characters of the unit. All the activities go around them. At the moment, children know two things about each finger: its colour and its name.

10. Activity: Who is missing?"

The aim of this activity is working more deeply with the new vocabulary acquired. Children are used to the "Who is missing?" formula because they use it every day in the routines to check who is at school and who is at home.

As a variation of the type of activity presented to the class, I do believe that this is a good activity to make it recognisable to children. Before starting, the teacher will summarize all the information with the children's help. They will go through each finger, naming it and saying which its colour is.

After the review, the teacher will ask children to close their eyes and he will hide one finger. When children open their eyes, they will be asked to guess which finger is missing. In this way, they are required to remember and repeat the vocabulary they have already internalized.

Once they have understood the way in which the activity is going on, one child can substitute the teacher and play his role in the classroom; so he will also produce questions. In addition, another variation for raising the difficulty level and integrating more contents will be the following one:

The teacher can hide more than a finger; he can hide Peter Pointer and Baby Small, for example. Children will be surprised when they find out something new in the activity. They will be asked "What happened?" "How many fingers are missing?" This variation will let them use numbers in a new different context.

Third Nursery Rhyme "I'm happy all day long"

Tommy Thumb, Tommy Thumb, where are you?

Here I am, here I am, how do you do?

Peter Pointer, Peter Pointer, where are you?

Here I am, here I am, how do you do?

Middle Man, Middle Man, where are you?

Here I am, here I am, how do you do?

Ruby Ring, Ruby Ring, where are you?

Here I am, here I am, how do you do?

Baby Small, Baby Small, where are you?

Here I am, here I am, how do you do?

Fingers all, Fingers all, where are you?

Here we are, here we are, how do you do?

11. Introduction to the Nursery Rhyme “Tommy Thumb, Where Are You?”

The new vocabulary introduced in relation with our fingers will be the moods:

- Happy
- Sad
- Angry
- Sleepy
- Hungry

Coloured stickers mentioned before, the ones located in the teacher’s fingers, will have faces drawn on them.⁷ Each finger face will clearly show its mood. Children will be asked, “How does Tommy Thumb feel?” In this case, the vocabulary will be introduced before the Nursery Rhyme so the way of working with it will be different.

Children do not know the words that are expected to appear in the answer to the teacher’s questions, that is why the interpretation of the teacher in this case will be the key point. The teacher will ask, “Is it sad or happy?” The voice intonation and the teacher face will show the meaning of each term, so children will be able to understand meanings by context.

12. Presentation and singing of the Nursery Rhyme: “I’m happy all day long”

For a better and more meaningful learning of the new vocabulary, I have chosen the Nursery Rhyme “I’m happy all day long”. We will introduce into the song the five moods that correspond to how our fingers feel. As in the other Nursery Rhymes worked in this Didactic Unit, first children contact with the song will be just the listening of it for familiarization.

After listening to the song at least twice, children will join it. It is a very funny song that gives a chance for a funny interpretation

I will suggest the incorporation of the new content to the routines, to achieve a more in-depth understanding and internalization of it. The helper could be asked every day how he or she feels. We can have different mood flashcards, and

⁷ See Annex III

every day the helper will choose the one that represents how he or she feels and will stick it in the backboard. It will make them realize about the application and usage of what they learn in the daily life.

Fourth Nursery Rhyme "I have ten little fingers and they all belong to me"

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

I have ten little fingers, and they all belong to me!

I can make them do things, would you like to see?

Open, shut them.

Open, shut them.

Give a little clap.

Open, shut them.

Open, shut them.

Lay them in your lap.

Crimp them, crimp them.

Crimp them, crimp them.

Right up to your chin.

Open wide your little mouth

But do not put them in.

Roll them, roll them.

Roll them, roll them

Roll them just like this.

Shake them, shake them.

Shake them, shake them.

Blow a little kiss.

13. Nursery Rhyme “I have ten little fingers and they all belong to me”

This Nursery Rhyme is a really interesting one to introduce actions. In addition, it is related to the topic of this didactic unit: our fingers.

This song tells how many things we can do with our fingers. It introduces very simple actions that children will receive with enthusiasm. The song by itself invites to dramatization, so children can interpret the actions said in the song while they are singing.

The actions presented in the song are the following ones:

- Open
- Shut
- Give a little clap
- Lay in your lap
- Crimp
- Roll
- Shake
- Blow a little kiss

This activity is a clear example of “learn by doing”. Children produce oral sentences in English and represent what they are saying simultaneously, so the understanding of what they are saying is easier and really meaningful to them.

In order to change a little bit the dynamics of the classroom and the classroom distribution, I consider that this is an accurate Nursery Rhyme to be used after any kind of activity. For example after an activity in which children stay for fifteen or twenty minutes sat in their chairs, singing this Nursery Rhyme would be a really powerful tool for letting them move, talk, and enjoy what they are doing. Movement is a significant factor in infants’ development and children have both the necessity and the capacity of moving, so the teacher should exploit this factor and make the most of it.

However, it does not mean that the contents or structures that appear in the song are less important than the ones that children work sitting in their chairs. It is just a different way of presenting material, and I do believe in using a variety of activities to foster learning in the classroom.

14 Bingo

To reinforce and review the actions that appear in the Nursery Rhyme, I have chosen a funny and appealing game. Bingo is an enjoyable game even for adults, and it is also for infants. As teachers, we must be creative and able to adapt situations, games, songs and activities to our students' state of development and their interests.

In this particular Bingo, each child will have a carton in which there will be six actions pictograms. The teacher will be taking a flashcard each time and saying the action that appears represented on it. If the action said by the teacher appears in a child's carton, this child will put a sticker on it. Once all the actions in the carton are covered with stickers, this child will have Bingo; what means that he or she is the winner of the game. This game can have a lot of variations depending on the topic is being studied in class. As in the "Go fish" game explained before; once children have learned how to play, they can do so autonomously.

It can be introduced as one more game in one of the corners of the class, for example in the puzzles one. Playing in smalls groups will be better than in one single big group because children will have more possibilities of winning and being the winner is a powerful conditioner and motivation factor in early stages. The language didactic aim of the activity is clearly interiorizing the new vocabulary. New actions can be added, both to the game and to the Nursery Rhyme.

TABLE 1 First Nursery Rhyme, Activity 1

Summary of the activity brief sequencing of activities: prompt	Contents			Skills, micro-skills, and strategies	Specific didactic aim
	Concepts	Procedures	Attitudes		
1. Presenting the Nursery Rhyme “Ten little fingers”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New specific vocabulary acquisition: numbers from one to ten 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infer the meaning of the new content contextually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening and watching actively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activate different kind of memory for retaining information. Remember words for some seconds for being able to use them later. Deduce what comes next from previous speech. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guess the meaning of the new content contextually Listen and watch actively Understand the content presented in the song
Activity description– grouping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group listening to the Nursery Rhyme “Ten little fingers”. The video will be played at least twice. 		Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital board Nursery Rhyme video 	Resolution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active listening to the song and getting familiarized to the new vocabulary. 	Duration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 minutes 	

TABLE 2 First Nursery Rhyme, Activity 2

Summary of the activity brief sequencing of activities: prompt	Contents			Skills, micro-skills, and strategies	Specific didactic aim
	Concepts	Procedures	Attitudes		
2. Singing the Nursery Rhyme “Ten little fingers”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning of the Nursery Rhyme • Oral repetition and usage of the new vocabulary and grammar structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singing the Nursery Rhyme • Interpretation of the song with gestures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorize a text • Produce English language orally • Remember vocabulary used previously • Use non-verbal codes (gestures and mimics) • Articulate clearly sounds and phonics in the speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate English language with enjoyable moments • Use the language as a tool for learning
Activity description– grouping		Materials	Resolution		Duration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group activity • Singing the Nursery Rhyme at least twice. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dramatization and singing of the “Ten little fingers” Nursery Rhyme. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 minutes

TABLE 3 First Nursery Rhyme, Activity 3

Summary of the activity brief sequencing of activities: prompt	Contents			Skills, micro-skills, and strategies	Specific didactic aim
	Concepts	Procedures	Attitudes		
3. How many fingers can you see here?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the vocabulary acquired through the Nursery Rhyme. How many...? Structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counting for solving a problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respecting speaking turns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activate the pre-knowledge for succeeding in new problem situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Associate the concept of number and the number words. Reinforce the counting technique
Activity description– grouping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assembly for developing the group and cooperative work. 		Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flashcards 	Resolution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the number of fingers shown in each flashcard 		Duration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 minutes

TABLE 4 First Nursery Rhyme, Activity 4

Summary of the activity brief sequencing of activities: prompt	Contents			Skills, micro-skills, and strategies	Specific didactic aim
	Concepts	Procedures	Attitudes		
4. Go fish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of numbers from one to ten • Do you have...? formula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matching two equal flashcards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following ruled games • Respecting turns • Playing autonomously 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internalize a specific English grammar structure • Remember vocabulary worked previously • Associate pictures and oral words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire a more in-depth assimilation of the number concept • Using English language in real contexts.
Activity description– grouping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small groups of 4 or 5 children. • Cards game in which each child will ask to the next to him child about a flashcard he needs for matching with one of the flashcards he has. 		Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cards 	Resolution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get pairs of cards • For example: “four-four” or “ten-ten” 		Duration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 minutes

TABLE 5 Second Nursery Rhyme, Activity 5

Summary of the activity brief sequencing of activities: prompt	Contents			Skills, micro-skills, and strategies	Specific didactic aim
	Concepts	Procedures	Attitudes		
5. Assembly for introducing the next Nursery Rhyme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New vocabulary: fingers' name Usage of the "What's your name?" formula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling interested about learning new vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anticipate what is coming later taking into account what is going on at the moment. Retain words that will be useful later 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use pre-knowledge for getting new information Get in touch with new struggling vocabulary they will need to know for later activities.
Activity description– grouping		Materials	Resolution		Duration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assembly 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	Get familiarized with the new vocabulary		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 minutes

TABLE 6 Second Nursery Rhyme, Activity 6

Summary of the activity brief sequencing of activities: prompt	Contents			Skills, micro-skills, and strategies	Specific didactic aim
	Concepts	Procedures	Attitudes		
6. Presenting the Nursery Rhyme: “Tommy Thumb where are you”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New specific vocabulary acquisition: fingers’ names “Where are you?” formula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infer the meaning of the new content contextually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening actively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activate different kind of memory for retaining information. Remember words for some seconds for being able to use them later. Remember words worked previously 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the meaning of the new content contextually Listen actively Understand the content presented in the song
Activity description– grouping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group activity Listen to the song at least twice. 		Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Tommy Thumb where are you” Nursery Rhyme 	Resolution Get in touch with the new song and the new vocabulary		Duration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 minutes

TABLE 7 Second Nursery Rhyme, Activity 7

Summary of the activity brief sequencing of activities: prompt	Contents			Skills, micro-skills, and strategies	Specific didactic aim
	Concepts	Procedures	Attitudes		
7. Singing the Nursery Rhyme “Tommy Thumb where are you”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning of the Nursery Rhyme • Oral repetition and usage of the new vocabulary and grammar structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singing the Nursery Rhyme • Interpretation of the song with gestures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorize a text • Produce English language orally • Remember vocabulary used previously • Use non-verbal codes (gestures and mimics) • Articulate clearly sounds and phonics in the speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate English language with enjoyable moments • Use the language as a tool for learning
Activity description– grouping		Materials	Resolution		Duration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group activity • Singing the Nursery Rhyme at least twice. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dramatization and singing of the “Tommy Thumb where are you” Nursery Rhyme. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 minutes

TABLE 8 Second Nursery Rhyme, Activity 8

Summary of the activity brief sequencing of activities: prompt	Contents			Skills, micro-skills, and strategies	Specific didactic aim
	Concepts	Procedures	Attitudes		
8. Assembly for ensuring children understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Usage of the vocabulary learned• Understanding questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of specific vocabulary: colours, fingers' names, numbers• Review of specific grammar structures: How many...? What's your name? Where is...?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respect speaking turns• Listen to classmates• Pay attention to classmates' opinions and answers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use efficiently speaking turns• Remember vocabulary used previously• Use vocabulary• Associate common vocabulary and structures used previously and actually required	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Answer questions• Internalize vocabulary• Gain control over the material
Activity description– grouping <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whole group activity.• There will be a hand-shape stuck in the blackboard. We will go through all the fingers and the teacher will ask to the group “What’s his name?” and “What colour is it?” The helper will chose one children each time for sticking the appropriate coloured sticker in each finger. Once the sticker is stuck, it would be convenient that the teacher makes emphasis on the structure “Tommy Thumb is red”		Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blackboard• Hand-shaped paper• Coloured stickers	Resolution <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stick correctly the coloured stickers in the appropriate finger		Duration <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 15 minutes

TABLE 9 Second Nursery Rhyme, Activity 9

Summary of the activity brief sequencing of activities: prompt	Contents			Skills, micro-skills, and strategies	Specific didactic aim
	Concepts	Procedures	Attitudes		
9. My hand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of all the material already worked Differentiation of the “hand” concept and the “finger” concept Differentiation of each single finger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colouring each finger using the right crayon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember concepts worked before Recognize material Associate two variables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate all the new information received until the moment for ensuring the understanding of new incoming material
Activity description– grouping Individual work Children will line their own hand’s shape on a paper. Once the hand is down, they will have to colour each finger of its colour, following the rules presented in the activities explained above		Materials Pencils Paper Crayons Tables	Resolution Colour each finger with its colour		Duration 25 minutes

TABLE 10 Second Nursery Rhyme, Activity 10

Summary of the activity brief sequencing of activities: prompt	Contents			Skills, micro-skills, and strategies	Specific didactic aim
	Concepts	Procedures	Attitudes		
10. Who is missing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Usage of the vocabulary learned: fingers' names	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Noticing the absence of one of the items worked before	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Respect speaking turns	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Participate activelyRespect speaking turnsListen to classmatesUse visual memory for retaining the necessary information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Recognize the absence of single elements in a whole.Gain control over the material.
Activity description– grouping Assembly, whole group activity The teacher will ask children to close their eyes and he will hide one finger. When children open their eyes, they will be asked for guessing which finger is missing. Variations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">One child can assume the teacher's roleTo hide more than one finger		Materials None	Resolution Guess which is/are the name/s of the finger/s hidden.		Duration 15 minutes

TABLE 11 Third Nursery Rhyme, Activity 11

Summary of the activity brief sequencing of activities: prompt	Contents			Skills, micro-skills, and strategies	Specific didactic aim
	Concepts	Procedures	Attitudes		
11. Assembly for introducing the new content: How does Tommy Thumb feel?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moods vocabulary: happy, sad, angry, sleepy, hungry • “How do you feel?” formula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaning inferences by context • Distinction between different voice intonations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active listening • Active participation • Identification of non-verbal input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inference of meanings attending to non-verbal information • Recognize the key words in a speech • Anticipate what is coming. • Internalize new words for its future need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infer the meaning of unknown words by context • Familiarize with the new material
Activity description– grouping Children will be asked, “How does Tommy Thumb feel?” Children do not know the words are expected to appear in the answer to the teacher questions, so the teacher will help them asking questions similar to” Is he sad or happy?” The voice intonation and the teacher face will show the meaning of each term.		Materials The coloured hand-shaped paper, but this time with a face drawn in each fingers.	Resolution Infer how does each finger feel.		Duration 20 minutes

TABLE 12 Third Nursery Rhyme, Activity 12

Summary of the activity brief sequencing of activities: prompt	Contents			Skills, micro-skills, and strategies	Specific didactic aim
	Concepts	Procedures	Attitudes		
12. Presenting the Nursery Rhyme “I’m happy all day long”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New specific vocabulary acquisition: moods Happy Sad Angry Sleepy Hungry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognizing the new vocabulary words in the song 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active listening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activate different kind of memory for retaining information. Remember words for some seconds for being able to use them later. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen actively Understand the content presented in the song
Activity description– grouping Group listening to the Nursery Rhyme “I’m happy all day long”. The song will be played at least twice.		Materials CD player Nursery Rhyme “I’m happy all day long”	Resolution Active listening to the song and getting familiarized to the new vocabulary.		Duration 15 minutes

TABLE 13 Third Nursery Rhyme, Activity 13

Summary of the activity brief sequencing of activities: prompt	Contents			Skills, micro-skills, and strategies	Specific didactic aim
	Concepts	Procedures	Attitudes		
13. Singing the Nursery Rhyme “I’m happy all day long”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning of the Nursery Rhyme • Oral repetition and usage of the new vocabulary and grammar structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singing the Nursery Rhyme “I’m happy all day long” • Interpretation of the song with gestures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active listening • Group work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorize a text • Produce English language orally • Use non-verbal codes (gestures and mimics) • Articulate clearly sounds and phonics in the speech • Activate different kind of memory for retaining information. • Remember words for some seconds for being able to use them later. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate English language with enjoyable moments • Use the language as a tool for learning • Listen actively • Understand the content presented in the song
Activity description– grouping		Materials	Resolution		Duration
Whole group activity Singing the Nursery Rhyme at least twice.		None	Dramatization and singing of the “I’m happy all day long” Nursery Rhyme.		15 minutes

TABLE 14 Third Nursery Rhyme, Activity 14

Summary of the activity brief sequencing of activities: prompt	Contents			Skills, micro-skills, and strategies	Specific didactic aim
	Concepts	Procedures	Attitudes		
14. Bingo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New vocabulary usage: actions • Reinforcement of the “Do you have...?” formula • Oral repetition and usage of the new vocabulary and grammar structures acquired 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and recognition of equal actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following ruled games • Respecting turns • Playing autonomously 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorize a text • Produce English language orally • Remember vocabulary used previously • Use non-verbal codes (gestures and mimics) • Articulate clearly sounds and phonics in the speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate English language with enjoyable moments • Use the language as a tool for learning
Activity description– grouping Whole group activity Each child will have a carton in which there will be 6 actions pictograms. If the action said by the teacher appears in a child’s carton, this child will put a sticker on it. Once all the actions in the carton are covered with stickers, this child will have Bingo; what means that he/she is the winner of the game.		Materials None	Resolution Each child will try to cover with stickers all the pictograms that appear in his or her carton when the actions represented in those pictograms are said by the teacher.		Duration 15-20 minutes

Análisis y resultados

First of all, it is necessary to say that I have had no opportunity to put this Unit into practice in a classroom, not even in the classroom it is based on because the elaboration of this project took place after doing my internship.

Due to that fact, the results I will explain now will be just expected results and not real results.

I have worked with those children for a long time and I do believe that I know them and their capacity. I have observed them doing a lot of English activities and their ability to understand and infer meaning through context really surprised me. I do considered infants capable of succeeding in second language activities that involve difficult content if it is well adapted and supported. However, I must confess that doing that internship in a three-year-old children classroom made me realize that I was underestimating early age children capacity. I had never observed directly 3-year-old children, and my expectations were not as high as the results I observed.

Both keeping this in mind and having revised all the theory explained in the Theoretical Frame, I would feel really optimistic about the possible results of applying the Didactic Unit designed in the classroom I stayed in.

From my experience with children during my degree, I think that even though children have common characteristics, each single group of infants has its own special conditions. The same classroom management may not work in every group, that is why teachers have to know their students to provide them with accurate activities and learning situations.

However, the Didactic Unit presented in this study has a powerful resource that articulates it: Nursery Rhymes. As I said before, children are naturally appealed to rhymes and they really enjoy songs; thus, Nursery Rhymes are an intelligent resource for using with infants. Furthermore, singing is a tool that usually works with any kind of child.

Additionally, the adaptations and skills used to make the most of the Nursery Rhymes available in the Didactic Unit, can turn them into really appropriate tools to use in the ESL classroom.

Considering the reasons and theories on which the elaboration of each activity is based, and the benefits of using Nursery Rhymes in Infant Education; children are expected to acquire both a meaningful knowledge about the new material presented during the whole Unit, and a more in-depth internalization of the material previously worked in class.

Using English vocabulary and English grammar structures to be able to express ideas and knowledge will allow ESL learners to gain control over the language. Being able to solve problems in the second language, students will feel confident when speaking in English, which is directly related to their improvement in oral language production. The more confident children feel speaking in the second language they are learning, the more active participation there is going to be in the classroom.

Children participation in class, then, is expected to increase. Speaking and producing language orally in a language that is not your mother-tongue is always frightening and uncomfortable, specially when talking about three-year-old children who are experiencing their first approach to the new language, The level of understanding is consistently wider than that of production.

This Didactic Unit organization together with the activities used to present language lead to oral production improvement in students.

CONCLUSIONS

Grammar is an essential and natural aspect of life. Without proper grammar it would be impossible to communicate with one another verbally or through the written word. These two aspects of life are very important to everybody. We enjoy communicating with other people, and without having a concept of proper grammar, communication would become incredibly hard.

Definitely, grammar as such is not something that people think of on a daily basis. People talk all day without thinking about why they say certain things in a particular order. Communicating comes naturally to everyone; it is mainly an unconscious process, so we never really think about why we say things the way we do. It is fascinating that people at such a young age can make complete and complicated sentences without ever taking classes of grammar. How can a four-year-old build up proper sentences without ever having proper grammar instruction? It is amazing how humans can pick up not only words, but how to put those words in the correct order and tenses without being taught how to.

Undoubtedly, grammar is an important aspect of every human being life, no matter the language they speak.

Due to that, ESL learners should have the most real language learning situations. Second language acquisition, as I have proved through this study, is much more similar to language acquisition of the mother tongue than we might initially believe.

Obviously, there are also many differences between the circumstances in which a person is involved when acquiring a first and a second language. As ESL teachers, it is indispensable to assess prior knowledge at the beginning of the ESL lessons so that we know where to begin. If there are any students who lack knowledge, we can be sure to fill in what they are missing. If all students know the basic concepts, we can include more in-depth information.

Supporting didactic material in the ESL classroom is also a really necessary tool to help students' understanding of contents. There should be visual support when presenting and working material in the second language. Working in small

groups is, as well, a powerful tool for using with ESL learners so that we can cater to all types of learning.

In Infant Education, there also are differences from Primary Education or Adult Education. The way children learn is not the same as the adults' one; and presenting information in a story format is quite beneficial.

One of the main ideas in which this study is supported is meaning-making process defended by the Constructivist Theories. We can talk about Content Literacy even in Infant Education. Content Literacy is based upon constructivist theories; and its definition is basically the usage of language to learn. By language, we cannot only refer to reading and writing; language includes writing, reading, listening, viewing and speaking. Students are expected to learn by listening for a significant portion of class time. Rarely, however, they are taught how to learn through listening, including responding strategies. Helping students to listen effectively makes them better learners and more effective communicators. Creating opportunities for purposeful student talk between learning partners, in small groups, or with the whole class help students to clarify their understanding and views as they combine new knowledge with prior knowledge.

Experiences that give students multiple opportunities to use all of their language processes to interact with and internalize new concepts, ideas, and information increase interest and improve learning.

Content literacy strategies are vehicles to transport students beyond rote learning to higher-order thinking. This learning has a cumulative advantage: the more students know about a subject, the easier it is for them to acquire new knowledge. This increases their receptivity to engaging in additional learning experiences.

Strategic learners are actively engaged in using content literacy strategies to process information, construct knowledge, and make critical judgments. Usage of content literacy strategies increases students' abilities to internalize content knowledge and to develop conceptual understanding of subject matter. That is why promoting content literacy by implementing content literacy strategies has a powerful impact on student learning and thinking.

Due to all that, literature is a recommendable tool for using in the ESL. ESL teachers must develop sensitivity to and awareness of learners' needs and learn effective strategies for achieving their students' meaningful learning.

To finish this study, I would like to share a magnificent sentence. *“Any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development” (Jerome Bruner, The Process of Education)*

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ANNEXES

Annex I

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TFayQJGJRA>

Annex II



Annex III

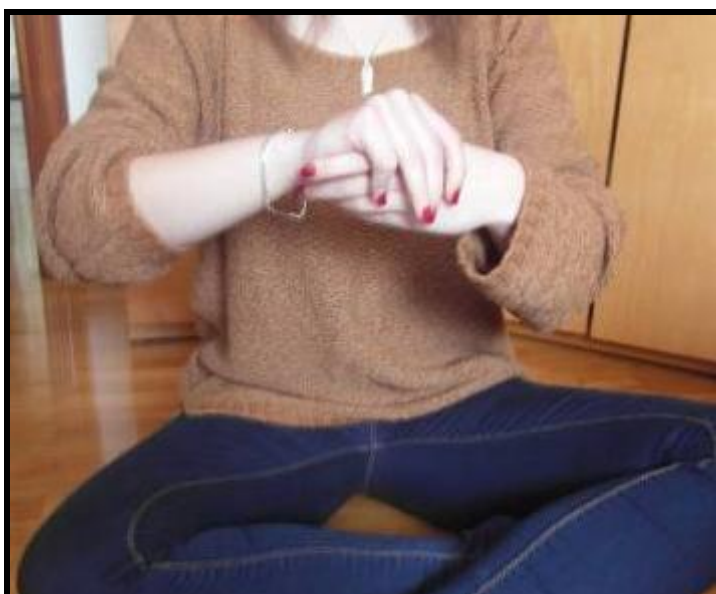
Annex IV



“Peter Pointer, Peter Pointer, Where are you?”



“Here I am, Here I am”



“How do you do?”

